

In Touch with Teens

Reviewer Comments

Reviewer 1 Comments:

- Guideline 1
 - This curriculum includes an entire unit that guides youth to explore the dynamics of healthy sexuality, integrally related to the unit on healthy relationships. The communication exercise was excellent.
- Guideline 2
 - The primary level of the social ecology addressed are the individual and relationship levels, but this curriculum places these levels in the context of community and societal level factors that influence violence in the very first unit. Creative activities intended to help students identify global and local roots of violence and explore the confounding factors that play into the culture of violence – internalized and institutionalized oppression, poverty, sexism, racism, classism, gender norms, etc. The curriculum is founded on sound social justice principals and helps students to place themselves as individuals in a world full of risk factors for violence. It also promotes protective factors through activities in various units revolving around discussing and coming to consensus on potential solutions to various social problems in participants’ communities and society (Unit II).
- Guideline 3 and 4
 - Skill building and self-awareness activities are interactive and participatory in all units. All important skills are covered – communication, conflict resolution and negotiation, bystander intervention and tolerance.
- Guideline 5
 - The theoretical foundation of this curriculum is very well-researched and the requisite activities and lessons reinforce protection against risk factors and promotion of protective factors for violence, at all four levels of social ecology.
- Guideline 6
 - Curriculum appears to be developmentally appropriate for the target audience (ages 12-19). Teachers/community educators are given many ideas for supplementary materials, variations of activities, and different films to reinforce the messages in the lessons, so there is plenty of room to modify the core messages based on age and other demographics.
- Guideline 7
 - The foundation of this curriculum recognizes the many different factors that contribute to individuals’ and communities’ experience of violence. The activities allow students to

define not just risk factors, but potential protective factors and strengths they see within themselves and their own communities. The participants really drive the direction of the discussion and activities, so that the curriculum is easily adaptable to different cultural and social groups.

- Guideline 8
 - There was an evaluation section in the curriculum binder, but I could not locate any materials in that section; therefore, I have no choice but to score this section as zero.
- Guideline 9
 - The instructor's guide thoroughly prepares facilitators with the theoretical and practical background behind the lessons and activities and gives a wide variety of options for teaching strategies. Variations on activities are provided, so the units can be adapted to different groups of participants. Additionally, academic standards that the curriculum augments or contributes to are explicitly discussed in the "How to Use the Curriculum" section.

Reviewer 2 Comments:

- Strengths
 - Comprehensive, multi-session program with thorough analysis of the intersection of multiple forms of oppression and manifestations of violence (bullying, sexual assault and gang violence in addition to TDV).
 - The curriculum affirms the positive – healthy relationships, healthy sexuality and peaceful communities in multiple sessions.
 - Program materials show advocates diverse in age, sex, ethnicity and culture and encourage the inclusion of community and culturally relevant materials.
 - The inclusion of a session on media analysis is great.
- Limitations
 - Most sessions and activities operate at the individual level of the social ecological framework with few exercises at the relationship and community levels.
 - Many exercises focus on discussion and generating ideas, but fewer opportunities to practice challenging skills (eg, bystander intervention, assertive communication, etc.) are included.
 - Many sessions and materials appear to be framed from adult experience of IPV rather than generated from a youth perspective (skill sets and expectations appear to be largely premised on committed relationships with little discussion of the spectrum of more casual teen relationship scenarios; limited discussion of the unique barriers attending to TDV – particularly social pressures; little discussion of the forms of teen abuse; intervention materials like the Safety Plan appear to be adult versions).

- The introduction described process and outcome evaluation strategies, but evaluation materials were not included in the packet so I was unable to assess those in a detailed way.

Reviewer 3 Comments:

- This is a well-rounded curriculum that addresses various forms of prevention from primary to secondary to tertiary and given the needs outlined in Heather's Law provides a teacher or classroom with a curriculum that could guide them through all aspects of domestic and sexual violence. The curriculum is set up in units that could be used individually or as a whole. While I would encourage a teacher to adopt the entire curriculum, I could see where it would be appropriate to utilize a unit here and there as time allowed and the class subject allowed.
- The curriculum begins with a goal to build generations of young people who practice healthy relationships free from violence and abuse.
- The topics then included in the curriculum are so many topics both on the prevention and intervention side including roots of violence, global and local; power and control, recognizing unhealthy relationships, bullying, breaking the cycle of violence, creating healthy relationships, issues of sexual assault and coercive control, respectful sexuality, sexual harassment, how the media affects violence.
- It is because of the wide range of topics that cover the spectrum of dating violence that I think this is an excellent curriculum. In the purest sense of primary prevention, it delves into secondary and a little into tertiary prevention, but the range that is covered is comprehensive and all of the materials are valuable for students to receive.
- While a teacher could take pieces of the curriculum as stand-alone segments, I would encourage the entire use of the curriculum over a period of time.
- When it came to the coring tools the areas where I scored the curriculum lower was on the social ecological model because it appeared to me that while the curriculum addressed globally at times how the issue affected society, the underlying focus was always on the individual student and didn't really work to cross over into other areas of the ecological model.
- On Guideline 7, while they discuss the importance of various cultural beliefs, I really don't find where they spent much time addressing the differences. They did include some history about how women used to be treated as property and how it has moved to more of an equality basis in marriages. They did also include information about alternative lifestyles.
- On Guideline 8, I really struggled with scoring that section at all because I saw no evidence of an evaluation plan other than a questionnaire that students completed at the end of each unit. Given the thoroughness of the curriculum, I would highly doubt there is not a very intense evaluation plan that takes place with this curriculum, given the fact this particular program is listed as a second edition.

- I would think this curriculum would be well received by teachers because at the beginning of each unit it clearly spells out what subjects that particular unit topic could be integrated into called – Academic Alignments, what the purpose of the unit is about, objectives and facilitator preparation.
- The curriculum is very well written, researched and appropriate for teens. I did not see where it could be adapted to the wide range of ages it says it covers – being 12-19 years old. My presumption would be that the units were designed to be used at the discretion of the teacher or facilitator and for the facilitator/teacher to determine what parts of the unit were appropriate for their specific audience. For instance, it might not be appropriate to show a particular movie that is suggested to 12 year olds, but I would be appropriate to show the same movie to 19 year olds.